THE OXFORD PAPER

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Cyclist takes on mountain climb for charity Page 10

Weekly leisure guide for in & around Oxford

Flood alleviation scheme to protect properties at risk

By Samantha McGregor

PLANS for a £120million flood alleviation scheme to protect homes and businesses in Oxford have taken a major step forward.

The Environment Agency has confirmed the business case has been signed off by the government and it is working on a planning application.

The Oxford flood alleviation scheme will run over a three-mile stretch from north of Botley Road to re-join the River Thames near Kennington.

It aims to prevent a repeat of "disruption and damage" caused by flooding in 2007 2012 and 2013/14.

As well as protecting homes and businesses the scheme would stop flooding in Botley and Abingdon roads which are major transport routes into the city

Most of the money is in place, but a further £4m is needed to complete the scheme

A spokesman for the Environment Agency said: "The outline business case for the Oxford flood alleviation scheme was approved by HM Treasury in November

"We are now working on the detailed design for the scheme and preparing for the planning application submission in spring 2018

"Commercial negotiations are ongoing alongside work with our scheme partners to increase their financial commitment."

It comes as a new report, commissioned by Vale of White Horse District Council, confirmed that the proposed flood alleviation scheme will ant impact communities downstream in the Vale or South Oxfordshire

Concerns had been raised the Oxford scheme would increase their flood risk.

> *The Oxford flood alleviation scheme will have a positive impact on people and communities outside of Oxford*
>
> **Jo Larmour, project director at the Environment Agency**

Cllr Matthew Barber leader of Vale of White Horse District Council, said. "This is very positive news

"Although we have always been supportive of the Oxford scheme it was important for us to listen and respond to our residents' concerns

"We know communities by the River Thames will always have concerns over flooding and we will continue to work with them and Environment Agency on feasible and appropriate flood prevention projects such as the St Helen's Mill scheme in Abingdon."

Jo Larmour project director at the Environment Agency, said. "The Oxford flood alleviation scheme will have a positive impact on people and communities outside of Oxford.

"The scheme will reduce disruption to roads and the railway during flooding, a relief to those who commute into Oxford or travel on surrounding transport links.

"This will also benefit the approximately seven million people who visit Oxford every year"

Layla Moran, Lib Dem MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, welcomed the report and said she would continue to lobby the government to invest in flood protection

The Oxford scheme is being funded by the government, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Oxford City Council and Thames Water

If the plans are approved work is due to start in 2018 and construction is expected to take three years

Santas *not* on the run!

Unfortunately these three hardy souls didn't see the message about the Helen & Douglas House Santas on the Run being cancelled on Sunday morning due to the heavy snowfall but they did get to enjoy the city covered in a blanket of snow all to themselves.
See page 19 for full story and more non-running Santas

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Further savings of £21m needed to meet budget

By Eva Astreinidou

OXFORDSHIRE is a step closer to reaching the end of a planned 'programme of savings but has warned a further £21million must also be cut

Since austerity began in 2010 Oxfordshire County Council will have found savings of £398m to date.

Last week it added 2021-22 to that timeframe and announced further savings of £21m were needed.

The leader of the council, Councillor Ian Hudspeth said, 'Having made difficult decisions in previous years we are now nearer to the end of our programme of savings than the start. However there are still some savings to make.

"We are a council that spends a great deal of its budget on caring for those in greatest need striving to give every child a good start in life and enabling older and disabled people to live independently That continues to be our focus."

The council has identified that it needs to plug a gap of around £9m in children's services due to population growth and increases in the number of children in care But it says a new strategy to reduce children in care and give families support at an earlier stage is planned to balance out the savings in the long term.

There are also further pressures on adult social care which mean that more than £10m will need to be found elsewhere

The council has also outlined several improvements, which include cancelling a previously agreed saving of £1 97m in which grass cutting services were to be axed.

In addition, it is hoped that £940 000 will be used to carry out work on cycle lanes and bus layhys including sign clearance and line painting in rural areas

An amount of £350 000 has also been set aside ahead of new building regulations after the tragic blaze at Grenfell Tower

The council also wants to speed £850 000 to create a team that will look at new ways to generate capital and look at investment opportunities

As agreed in February the budget proposals also include a council tax increase by 4 99 per cent, of which three per cent will go towards providing adult social care services.

The county council will meet today (Thursday) to discuss ways the books can be balanced before a formal budget-setting meating in February

To comment and see a full list of the proposals before January 8, visit www oxfordshire.gov uk/budget

Hammer-wielding men target OAP in aggravated attack

THREE balaclava-clad men armed with hammers broke into a house and attacked a man in his eighbes with a plate.

Police are appealing for witnesses following the aggravated burglary in Oxford on December 5

At around 4.20pm, the three men broke into a property in Hill View Sandhills, armed with hammers

One of the men struck one of the occupants, a man aged in his eighbes over the head with a plate

The victim managed to fight him off with a chair

The offenders ran out of the property into a waiting car which drove off at speed, narrowly avoiding a man who was crossing the road pushing a pushchair

Two of the offenders are described as white and the other was black.

No one was injured during the incident.

If you can help, call 181

Police reissue appeal after possible sighting of UEFA boss

POLICE are continuing a cross border investigation to find a missing former UEFA boss who was last seen in October

Bernard Ross, 51, pictured, is believed to have travelled from Oxford to the south of France on October 18 – but officers say there was a report of a possible sighting last week.

Police are now re-appealing to the public for help following the report from Nyon, Switzerland, on Friday

Mr Ross is described as 5ft 7ins tall, of medium build, he is a fluent French speaker and it is believed he may have been using a bicycle to travel around.

He is believed to have been on foot on Friday.

Thames Valley Police Chief Superintendent Christian Bunt said "We are continuing our investigation to locate Mr Ross as we have increasing concerns for his welfare. It is believed he does not have access to the medication he requires

"I would like to reiterate that if anyone sees Mr Ross, they should call police immediately so that we can check that he is safe and well."

Last month, his wife Jacinta issued a plea for him to come home in time for Christmas saying his family missed him desperately

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Cup recycling idea brings new business

A YEAR ago Thomas Wylam won a Dragon's Den style business contest with his cup recycling plan

Over the past 12-months the Princes Risborough Upper School pupil has been developing his idea with mentors from local businesses

Now the recycling scheme Cupcycl which provides the infrastructure to allow people to drop disposable drink cups in collection-points so they can be recycled into new products- is to be rolled out in Thame.

Thomas said disposable cups have a special wax coating to waterproof them so cannot be eas ly recycled and take decades to rot in landfill

By collecting the cups at collection-points they can be recycled and made into something else

Thomas said "Thame s Young Entrepreneur Competition gave me the opportunity to take an idea and run with it.

"It's fantastic to have gone through this process and get to where I am now with a project that brings something unique to the local area

"This helped me develop my scheme so that I could exhibit at Thame Food Festival where I recycled the cups of over 1 200 visitors to my stand

"I m delighted with the interest I've had from other local event organisers who may run this scheme at their events."

Last year's contest was organised as part of Small Business Saturday

Young entrepreneurs aged under 30 who had a business idea they wanted to develop were urged to enter the competition to win £500 cash plus business mentoring

Award reveals love for city

OXFORD has been dubbed one of the best UK travel destinations for young people as the city scooped a silver award at the British Youth Travel Awards in London last week.

The city won the accolade in the Best UK Youth Destination category and is the result of the hard work of visitor information service Experience Oxfordshire which works with local partners including the city and county councils to promote Oxford's diversity, history and heritage.

Representing Oxford at the awards, Hayley Bear Gamage Experience Oxfordshire chief executive, said: "We are delighted with the silver award as it shows that young people love visiting our city of dreaming spires. We know what a great destination Oxford is and it's great to see this recognised by the millennial generation."

Councillor Bob Price, leader of Oxford City Council, said he was "delighted but not at all surprised that Oxford has been voted as one of the UK's best cities for young travellers".

He added: "As a university city we have a fabulous range of cafes, clubs, bars for young people and an arts, music and dance scene that is among the best in the country for a small city."

Experience Oxfordshire chief executive Hayley Bear-Gamage (third from right, celebrates Oxford's achievement with other award winners

InBrief

Flasher at school

A MAN exposed himself outside of a school in Oxford four times in one week.

Police are investigating four incidents of indecent exposure outside St Clare's School in Banbury Road.

According to police, the incidents occurred between 11pm and 1am on November 24, November 26, November 27 and December 1.

The offender is described as a white man, in his 40s, with dark hair. He was wearing a brown jacket and khaki trousers.

If you can help, call 101.

Seacourt park and ride to expand

CONTROVERSIAL plans to use green belt land to expand a park and ride car park in Oxford have been approved.

Oxford City Council said expanding the Seacourt Park and Ride on Botley Road would help cope with the ever increasing numbers of cars coming into the city.

The development will increase the number of spaces from 786 to 1,452 spaces.

Oxford Green Belt network was one of the groups that objected to the application, saying it would increase flood risk in the area. It added: "It is difficult to think of a more unsuitable site."

The council's planning committee supported the development after a report backed by the Environment Agency which said the plans would not increase the risk of flooding.

Emergency shelter for homeless launches as temperature plunges

By Eva Astreinidou

MORE than 20 homeless people made use of an emergency shelter in Oxford as severe weather and record sub-zero temperatures hit the city.

With overnight temperatures falling as low as -9 earlier this week, Oxford City Council extended its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which is activated only in extreme conditions.

They went through with the emergency measures on Friday with 22 people making use of the facilities.

Speaking on Monday board member for housing councillor Mike Rowley said: "We have a humanitarian obligation to do everything we can to prevent serious harm – or worse – to homeless people on the city's streets."

The move follows consultations with local partners St Mungo's and Homeless Oxfordshire, who provide more than 200 bed spaces through their hostel and further accommodation in the community.

Claire Dowan, CEO of Homeless Oxford, said: "The implementation of SWEP means that we provide a further 10 spaces.

"It is a harsh reality that people are at risk of dying on the streets during the winter and collectively we continue to do our best to reduce rough sleeping in Oxford."

SWEP opens on the first night of a period when the Met Office forecasts the temperature will fall to zero or below on three or more consecutive nights.

But Green party leader David Thomas said the protocol should be made available as soon as the forecast predicts below zero for just one night.

He said: "It is great that the protocol is there but I would like to see a further humanitarian step of reducing the requirement to one night."

Now, the Green party is working with charity Homes4All to open a temporary homeless hostel and shop on Cornmarket Street.

Homes4All trustee Kym Marie Cleasby said the charity was approached by Lush to say its old premises in Cornmarket Street can be used until its lease runs out at the end of January next year.

This comes as the charity's plans to turn buses into homeless shelters for people who have an local connection was rejected by the city council earlier this month.

Ms Cleasby added: "The hostel will act as a stop-gap until we raise enough funds to convert our first bus into a shelter.

"We're now putting out an urgent call to businesses and the public to help us decorate and fit-out the building."

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Youth groups urged to apply for grant share

YOUTH organisations in Oxford are being urged to apply for grants to support their work.

Oxford City Council has set aside £180,000 for 2018/19 to support young people's wellbeing, health and education.

The funding is split into two categories, youth ambition which funds projects including mental health and wellbeing, sexual health and relationships, crime and anti-social behaviour and employment, education and independent living.

In the second category for holiday activities organisations can apply for up to £20,000 to deliver holiday events for children aged eight to 19.

Cllr Marie Tidball said: "The grants programme aims to build capacity in the voluntary and charity sector to better meet the needs of children and young people.

"We greatly encourage interested groups to apply for one of the grants."

One previous recipient of the youth ambition grant was The Parasol Project, which received £6,027 to fund a volunteering project for 41 disabled and non-disabled young people who supported other youngsters who may be disavantaged or vulnerable.

The deadline for applications is January 14.

For more information and eligibity go to oxford.gov.uk/youthambition

Club captain Darren Elliott launched tha shirt at partners KuPP in the Westgate

OXFORD City Stars couldn t resist joining in with the festive celebrations as they unveiled a special one-off Christmas jersey.

The city s ice hockey team received special dispensation from the league for the players to don the Christmas jumper themed kit for the home league game against Lee Valley on Sunday.

Each player s shirt will be auctioned off afterwards to raise cash for the ch ldren's ward at tha John Radcliffe Hospital.

Fans are also encouraged to bring teddies and soft toys to the match for fellow supporters to buy and throw onto the ice in a mass 'teddy throw' to raise additional funds for the charity drive.

Stars players will present a big cheque when they make their annual visit to the children s ward on December 19 along with toys they have been collecting from retailers and fans.

The NIHL South 2 outfit raised £1,000 for the hospital last year and hope to beat that this year.

Stars director Greig Box Turnbull said: "The club started this last year and it was really popular. It meant so much to the players to give a bit back especially at Christmas, so much so former player James Clarke has organised this year s fund raising.

"It has really galvanised the club and we decided to go a step further this year with the one-off Christmas jerseys to give our backing to a great cause and help raise more awareness of the great work the hospital does and also to raise more funds."

InBrief

Theft from house

A NUMBER of people broke into a house in Oxford and stole cash.

Police have now released this CCTV image of a man who they believe may have vital information in connection with the burglary on November 22.

The incident took place between about 5am and 6.30pm in Rosamund Road, Oxford.

A number of unknown offenders gained entry to the house by smashing a window at the rear of the property. A small amount of cash and other small household items were stolen.

If you can help, call 101.

Tour guide operator

OXFORD Bus Company has taken over the running of Guide Friday and City Sightseeing Oxford bus tours.

The bus firm announced last week it had bought previous operators, Tom Tappin Limited.

The sightseeing operation will continue to be run as a standalone business and will receive fresh investment in due course, according to Oxford Bus Company.

Housing boost and no cuts to services under city budget proposals

Council bids to cut gap between rich and poor

By Eva Astreinidou

NEW budget proposals aim to reduce 'the gap between the rich and the poor' in Oxford despite a £9million package of funding coming to an end.

Oxford City Council unveiled plans for a balanced budget over the next four years earlier this week, promising no cuts to services extra measures to tackle homelessness and increased investment in council housing.

This is despite a central Government grant worth £9million being withdrawn in 2019/20.

Councillor Ed Turner, deputy leader of the council and board member for finance and asset management, said the budget will make a 'real difference' while the city goes through 'challenging times'.

He said: "There are significant challenges – poverty and homelessness continue to be major problems, with rough sleeping numbers rising steeply – some government policies, notably the freeze on benefits and the introduction of Universal Credit, may exacerbate that trend."

As part of the plans the council has proposed to increase the current £1.4m yearly funding of homeless prevention services by £200,000 while also pumping an additional £5m to purchase properties for temporary accommodation for local homeless families.

It also hopes to grant a £61m loan to the Housing Company a council-owned company to build and acquire 500 new homes, while also pumping £24.4m into refurbishment of existing council houses.

To further boost financial inclusion the council is proposing to maintain the full level of council tax support to households on low incomes.

Council tax is expected to increase by 1.99 per cent in 2018/19.

Cllr Turner added: "Reducing the gap between rich and poor, cutting our carbon footprint, maintaining high-quality public services tackling homelessness and providing more homes and keeping our city safe, remain top priorities."

The proposals also include freezing park and ride charges to encourage motorists not to drive into the city – but charges will rise at other council car parks in the city.

Further plans to be funded by capital investment include £16m to redevelop the East Oxford Community Centre with council housing on three sites.

Funding for this investment comes from a mixture of rental income from council housing and commercial buildings, council tax and business rates which is expected to increase with the addition of units at the Westgate which are expected to bring in an additional £1.3m per year.

The plans will be considered by the city executive board on December 20, and will then go forward to public consultation before being considered by full council in February 2018.

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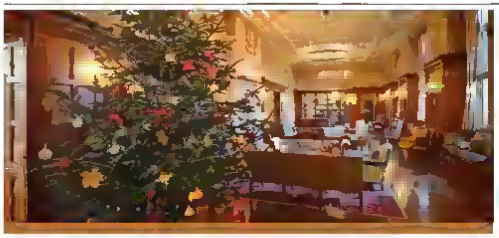

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News

Pictures *Oxford Medical Illustration*

Team of the year went to the Trauma Unit Relocation Team; top right, Anne Marie Froheck was the award for excellence winner while the supporter of the year award bottom right, was awarded posthumously to Liberty, who raised £11,000 for Oxford Children's Hospital after being treated for a rara form of bona cancer. Liberty sadly passed away shortly after the nomination, aged just 14

Honours for hospital staff at awards night

By Eva Astreinidou

DOCTORS and nurses from Oxford hospitals swapped scrubs for formal wear at a special awards ceremony honouring their achievements over the last year

Medics attended the annual Staff Recognition Awards at Oxford Town Hall last week, where winners and runners up were picked from more than 600 nominations

All eight categories featured in the ceremony were designed to celebrate the excellent contribution they had made to patient care and working life at Oxford University hospitals throughout the year

One of the night's winners was Anne Marie Froheck, an advanced paediatric diabetes dietitian, who received the award for excellence for her work setting up a specialised service for young, athletic patients struggling to manage their Type 1 diabetes.

She said: "I feel so humble and honoured to receive the award. It was a wonderful, positive evening and incredibly inspiring to hear what others around the trust have achieved."

The trust's IT department scooped the 'highly commended' accolade in the Team of the Year category for their dedication to providing high quality cyber security which protected the Trust from the nationwide cyber attack in May

The Patients' Choice Award, which was launched at last year's ceremony went to craniofacial specialist nurse Kari Ashton

Her nominator Sarah said: "Kari is a wonderful lady. She listened to our concerns every step of the way. Her impact on our family was huge."

Other highlights included a festive opening performance from St Joseph's School Choir, the brand new Chairman's Award and a photography slideshow finale showcasing the best moments from the evening

High vis message about site safety

YOUNGSTERS in Didcot received a special lesson about the importance of health and safety from a national housebuilder

Pupils from Ladygrove Park Primary School learnt about the potential risks and hazards on and around building sites in a special interactive assembly last week.

In the lesson led by Miller Homes' health, safety and environmental advisor Alec Arnold, the children aged seven to 11 also learnt how homes are built.

Mr Arnold said: "Working with local schools enables us to give youngsters a fun and informative insight into why they should stay away from building sites, as well as teaching them about how modern homes are built.

Miller Homes' health and safety advisor Alec Arnold with some of the children from Ladygrove Park Primary School

"It's always fantastic to see the children keen to get involved."

The school in Avon Way is located close to the housebuilder's Bradbery Gardens development

Carrie Barringer, inclusion manager at the school, said: "It was brilliant to see everyone having so much fun, the children particularly liked trying on the high-vis jackets and hard hats."

Pupils' crowning glory with roles in blockbuster drama

By Samantha McGregor

FOR a year pupils have kept tight lipped about their role in an award-winning blockbuster drama.

Now pupils from Kingham Hill School, near Chipping Norton can shout from the rooftops about their part in Netflix show The Crown.

More than 80 pupils from the independent school were cast in the series.

The students appear alongside former Doctor Who star Matt Smith, who plays Prince Philip

Season two of the Golden Globe winning drama was released last week and the pupils will finally get a chance to see themselves on television.

The show is a biographical story about the reign of Queen Elizabeth II and stars Claire Foy as the Queen and John Lithgow as Winston Churchill.

Last December 82 Kingham Hill boys aged 11 to 18 joined Matt Smith, on location at a Cotswold estate to film scenes for episode nine in the second series

The boys were transformed from 21st century students into pupils from the 1930s and 1960s to play school friends and peers of Princes Philip and Charles

The budding actors got to experience the working life of professionals when they had their hair styled and costumes fitted by the on-set team before taking their turn in front of the bright lights and cameras.

Pupil Felix Parkinson, who is in Year 11 spoke about the experience of filming on a star studded set

He said, "Working on a film set is quite an experience it is unlike anything I've ever done before

"The early wake up calls were worth it for the chance of being on the show

"I will never forget it and it is certainly something different to have on my CV"

The pupils were cast following successful auditions at Kingham Hill School s drama studio in November 2016

Kingham Hill School pupils were transformed into pupils from the 1930s and 1960s and right, second deputy Rob Janes with Matt Smith who plays Prince Philip and pupil Alex Jones, one of those lucky enough to be cast

Warnings and advice as severe weather strikes

HEAVY snowfall and icy conditions caused major disruption across roads, households and schools in Oxfordshire.

The public were advised not to travel unless absolutely necessary while hundreds of homes experienced a loss of power.

More than 90 schools across the county were also affected, with some imposing a partial closure or later opening time Many closed completely on Monday and Tuesday due to safety concerns, hazardous driving conditions and lack of staff availability

Scottish and Southern Electric said homes in Grove, Faringdon and Kidlington were still experiencing power problems on Monday, more than 24 hours after the first snow fell.

Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach Oxford suspended all services on Monday

All 25 county council gritters worked through from 3am – gritting all A-roads B-roads and some C roads.

Paul Wilson the council's winter operations manager said. "Gritting and snowploughing helps keep the main roads clear but it doesn't turn December into July We would ask people to drive very carefully"

Bin collections were also affected in South and West Oxfordshire on Monday but a South Oxfordshire District Council spokesperson tweeted that most side streets were too dangerous for their 26 tonne trucks.

New head to boost county healthcare

By Eva Astreinidou

A NEW CEO will be taking on the responsibility of helping develop healthcare in Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group has announced Louise Patten is taking on the role of interim CEO, starting on January 1.

The decision to find a permanent leader has been deferred until next year following the retirement of David Smith earlier this year.

Ms Patten said: "I am really looking forward to working with colleagues in Oxfordshire. I hope the experience I bring will enhance the plans for transforming health and social care services in Oxfordshire."

In the past few years, Ms Patten has been involved in federating NHS Aylesbury Vale and NHS Chiltern CCGs and further developing collaborative working in the Buckinghamshire health and care system.

In that time, she led a project in which Buckinghamshire become one of the first eight NHS Accountable Care Systems being set up across the country to provide better coordinated care between GPs and hospitals, physical and mental healthcare and social care.

She added: "Patients want to see organisations working together as one body responsible for their health and care getting the best outcomes and offering value for the money we have available."

Ms Patten will keep working in her current role as chief officer at NHS Aylesbury Vale and NHS Chiltern CCGs in Buckinghamshire.

Dr Kiren Collison, clinical chair of Oxfordshire CCG said: "Louise will bring a wealth of experience which will help Oxfordshire drive forward its plans for more collaborative working between health and social care providers."

Snow show for animals

It seems snowy is a fascination whether you're a child or an animal at a wildlife park.

And these furry and feathered friends at Cotswolds are no exception as they ventured out into the white stuff on Sunday.

But they weren't the only ones getting used to different surroundings as the park also welcomed a baby antelope.

A zookeeper has stepped in to help raise female calf Autumn who was sadly rejected by her mother, one of a breeding pair of dwarf antelope species Kirk's Dik-dik.

Jade Stott took on the role of surrogate mother, hand-rearing the newborn for the last two months to give her the best chance of survival.

Describing her experience, she said: "It's been hard work but a real joy watching her defy the odds and develop into a curious, playful and occasionally cheeky little character."

Initially, Jade bottle-fed the youngster beginning at 8.30am and continuing feeds every few hours throughout the day through to 11pm.

Autumn is now fully weaned and is currently eating smaller versions of the adult diet of fruit and veg.

The park issued a notice to say it would be closed due to extreme weather conditions until at least Saturday but will update the general public if the situation changes.

Flamingoes, a red panda, a capybara and a group of otters all came out to play in the snow on Sunday

Autumn the baby antelope was bottle fed by keeper Jade Stott

Pictures Cotswold Wildlife Park

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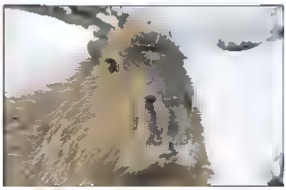

Pupil's design is to become MP's Christmas card

Victoria Prentis MP with card design winner Ethan Osborne

A CHRISTMAS card designed by a Bicester school pupil will be dropping onto doormats far and wide.

Ethan Osborne, of Bure Park Primary School, Bicester, won the annual Christmas card competition organised by north Oxfordshire MP Victoria Prentis.

Each year the MP challenges school children across her constituency to design a card for the 250 people on her Christmas card list.

She has run the contest since she was elected in 2015.

Earlier Mrs Prentis dropped into Bure Park School to deliver Ethan's prize which included some copies of the card and gifts from the House of Commons. Ethan and his family will also visit the Houses of Parliament early next year.

Mrs Prentis said: "I love running my Christmas card competition every year, and we always have some brilliant entries.

"Ethan's really stood out for his clever use of the silhouette design. It's a lovely piece of artwork and the cards look fantastic this year – I am sure everyone on my list will be very impressed."

Ethan said: "I really enjoyed meeting Victoria at school and am looking forward to visiting the Houses of Parliament.

"I liked designing my card and was very excited that I won. I would recommend everyone to take part next year."

Clubbers asked to give a quid and help children

LOVE Island winner Kem Cetinay is backing a Christmas children's charity drive by Oxford club ATIK which is asking clubbers to 'Give a Kid a Quid'.

Festive revellers at the Park End Street venue are invited to donate spare change to The Echo Trust to benefit local children's charities.

The charity was set up in 2002 by late-night bar and club operator The Deltic Group.

Since then it has raised more than £2.5million and supported causes ranging from children's hospitals to charity groups.

ATIK general manager Nick Greensted said: "Christmas is a time for giving and we're sure our customers will respond generously to our appeal.

"Give a Kid a Quid is a simple way to raise a lot of money that will transform the lives of local young people in our community."

The appeal runs until Saturday, January 6.

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News

Giant climb for charity

By Eva Astreinidou

A BRAVE cyclist took on a giant of a mountain in France to help raise more than £3 000 for charity

Peter Lockey decided to take on the challenge for Oxford based homeless charity, the Gatehouse which provides a cafe for the homeless and other vulnerable people in the city

The intrepid cyclist took an 136km across three ascents of Mont Ventoux in France, raising £2,690 for the charity with a colleague

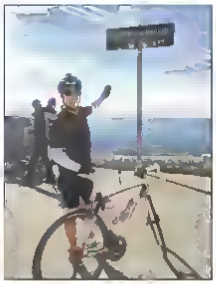
Peter, who works as leadership team ambassador at The Midcounties Co-operative in central Oxford said: "The cycle challenge was one of the toughest I've taken on yet I d done a lot of training before but nothing quite prepares you for taking on the giant of Provence, as many call it, three times

"The Gatehouse is the Midcounties charity partner in the area, which we donate funds to through a number of initiatives It really does go a long way in supporting the good work they do for the community"

Meanwhile, colleagues across Oxfordshire were busy helping to increase awareness of the charity through a four-day bucket collection, raising an additional £307

Katrina Horne, project director at The Gatehouse, said: "The funds raised by Midcounties will be greatly appreciated by our guests who miss the comforts of home cooked food and a comfortable space to relax in

"We've been lucky enough to work with The Midcounties Co-operative on several projects in the past also receiving donations from its carrier bag fund and collage bake sales, and look forward to continuing to work with them in future"



Peter Lockey cycled Mont Ventoux in France for Gatehouse

Cash boost to aid six projects

A STRING of organisations that help train and equip people for work have won grants to keep up the good work.

The move brings the total awarded this year by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) to more than £390 000.

Six projects have been given a cash injection – EMBS Community College Film Oxford and Fusion Arts, Farm Inspiration Trust Leys News, Oxfordshire Play Association and Incredible Edible Oxford.

The cash is part of the European Social Fund (ESF) Community Grants programme which aims to support residents in Oxfordshire's most disadvantaged communities and help them access work or training

Rachel Hammond, founder of Incredible Edible Oxford said "We are so excited to be creating accredited courses in edible horticulture and eco building these skills are more in demand year on year and our courses will be targeted primarily at 16 to 19 year-olds wanting to work in a practical way outdoors."

Nigel Tipple, chief executive of OxLEP said: "Oxfordshire continues to reaffirm a world leading economy and it is programmes – like ESF Community Grants – that help to ensure those furthest away from the job market get opportunities to access employment and training that is both personally fulfilling and supports our local economy too."

For more go to oxford.gov.uk/esf

Supporting girls with autism

STAFF from schools across the county have taken part in a workshop aimed at supporting girls with autism.

Teachers and teaching assistants from 20 Oxfordshire schools learned more about how they can help girls who are on the autism spectrum.

It took place at LVS Oxford, a mixed school for young people aged 11-19 with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum, and was led by Deirdre Nic Sitric a specialist trainer and founder of Autism Champions

Ms Nic Sitric said. "Autism has historically been considered a predominantly 'male brain' condition so in the past it wasn't on the radar of parents, educators and health professionals when dealing with girls

"Girls tend to be better than boys at masking their difficulties and are generally better at mirroring friends to cover up their social communication and relationship issues.

"However, they pay a price for keeping things together during the school day Autistic girls are at much higher risk of mental health difficulties.

"This workshop looked at the challenges that autistic girls face and the differences between boys and girls experience of autism."

Head of School Louisa Allison Bergin said. "This workshop was so important as educators in mainstream schools clearly want to do the very best for all their students and need the knowledge to be able to identify girls who may be struggling in silence."

LVS Oxford Head of School Louisa Allison-Bergin (left) with guest speaker Deirdra Nic Sitric at the workshop

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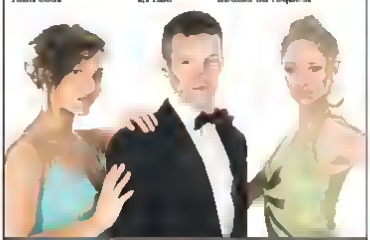
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Town's great and good remembered in names

By Eva Astreinidou

STREET names in a new housing development will remember those who made their mark on the town.

The West Witney scheme – the first phase of which is now under way – will feature around 1,000 homes.

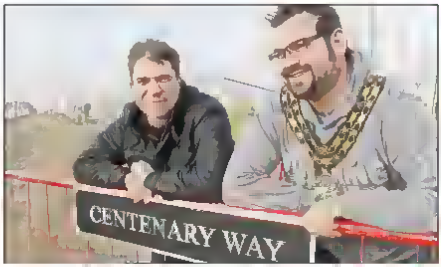
It has now been revealed 10 of the street names around the development will be commemorating historic figures who had an influence on the town, following consultation with Witney town council and the help of historian Stanley Jenkins.

Cllr James Mills, leader at West Oxfordshire District Council, said: "Many of the names will be familiar to local people as they are of individuals in living memory who have made a major contribution to the town.

"This is a wonderful way of commemorating their efforts and will ensure they continue to be familiar to future generations."

Some of the names include Mary Box Crescent – named after Mary Box who co-founded Henry Box School with her husband Henry.

Another street is Mott Close – after Edward Mott, who was awarded the Victoria Cross after serving with the 1st Battalion of The Border Regiment in the First World War.



West Oxfordshire District Council leader James Mills with Witney mayor Chris Woodward

Rayson Lane will be named after Thomas Rayson, the architect responsible for both the central Witney and Newland war memorials.

There will also be a Centenary Way to mark the 100-year anniversary since the end of the First World War.

The 73-hectare West Witney development will include a new primary school, space for a secondary school, a neighbourhood centre with shops, a free car park, as well as a potential 80-unit care home.

A minimum of 30 per cent of the housing will be affordable.

There will be significant highway improvements as a result of the scheme, while developer-funded contributions will go towards West Witney recreation ground (£250,000) and the Corn Exchange (£100,000) as well as town centre and car parking improvements (£250,000) and public art (£100,000).

Shelley Wright and Rebecca Rimmer are proud to be firefighters

You don't have to be the Hulk to join!

OXFORDSHIRE'S Fire and Rescue Service is encouraging women to help them put out fires in more ways than one.

The team has 32 operational firefighters who are female, making up just six per cent of the service.

Aside from dealing with crises such as flooding, road accidents, and chemical hazards, they help coordinate emergency planning and educate on safety and prevention for the local community.

They are also mums, shopkeepers, and marathon runners of all ages and backgrounds.

Rebecca Rimmer, who has been with the fire service for 13 years, said: "You don't have to be the Incredible Hulk or Lara Croft. I am neither."

She joined the fire service when she was 21, and now has two children who are very proud to have a firefighter mummy.

She added, "There is the perception that you have to be very young and fit. There is a required standard to ensure safety, however many female firefighters are mums, they come from all backgrounds and a range of ages."

Shelley Wright, who is 23 and has been with the fire service for 18 months, said: "When I joined Wantage fire station there hadn't been a woman there for five years. When the chief talked to me recently about being the only woman there I had forgotten about that – I am just part of the team."

To find out more, visit tinyurl.com/y7c6s7kn

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The survey confirms what some Audiologists have suspected for some time, that hearing aids are not only good for correcting hearing loss but in fact contribute to better and more active lives, better quality of life, and better overall health.

For the hearing impaired workers who wear a hearing aid it is reported that their hearing aids are useful for their job and that the hearing aids also increase the chance of them getting promoted, being in the right job and getting more salary compared to those hearing impaired people who have not obtained hearing aids.

The full report can be found at EuroTrak UK 2015 – ehima

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Officers honoured for helping islanders after hurricane hit

By Eva Astreinidou

POLICE officers who dropped everything to help those whose lives were devastated by Hurricane Irma have been honoured at a special ceremony.

Five officers from Thames Valley Police, along with five from Hampshire, were deployed to the British Virgin Islands for three weeks when disaster struck in September.

With no running water or mains electricity, no roof on their accommodation and criminals on the run after the prison was severely damaged, the team showed great determination and bravery.

Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Francis Habgood said: "These officers provided security, support and compassion in really difficult circumstances.

"I know that the islanders were incredibly grateful for their presence and the officers were pleased to have been there to help them. I am very proud of them."

During their deployment the team of 10 helped to secure prisoners who were on the run, assisted the military with establishing water and electricity supplies and cleared dangerous debris from neighbourhoods.

The team worked at least 16 hours a day most days all in 40 degree heat while wearing their uniforms designed for British weather.

Food was also in short supply and the team relied on basic rations to get them through.

The group even refused to leave when a second category five hurricane hit the island, insisting that they wanted to be there for those who needed them most.

Hampshire Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney said: "These officers have dealt with some of the most challenging situations that any officer can face and they have shown nothing but great professionalism and compassion.

"I am so proud of them all and residents living in Hampshire and the Thames Valley should take great comfort in knowing that such dedicated officers are working hard every day to make our communities safer."

The officers honoured from Thames Valley were Sgt David Keith, PC Simon Gray, PC David Kuttner, PC Jonathan Evans and PC Sean O'Neill.

Some of the officers who helped in the British Virgin Islands after the hurricane struck and below, the team with Chief Constables Francis Habgood, far left and Olivia Pinkney, far right

In Brief

Library activities

A LIBRARY will open its doors to the public during an action-packed week of events to celebrate the new facility.

Oxfordshire County Council's new facility at Westgate will host a variety of activities including live music and dance workshops, craft demonstrations and exhibitions from Monday.

The library, which replaces the old Central Library at Oxford's regenerated Westgate centre, will boast an impressive range of new features and services, including a 'makerspace' for community activities and special events and a much larger children's library.

For more information visit tinyurl.com/y7smzev5

Festive safety tips

PEOPLE can get tips on how to stay safe during the festive season at a safe zone event in High Street on Friday and Saturday nights.

Run jointly by Cherwell District Council and Thames Valley Police, revellers can pick up anti-spiking bottle stoppers and try out beer goggles which provide a sobering insight into how debilitating binge drinking is.

Cherwell District Council leader Harry Wood said they want people to stay safe while having fun and make sure they are aware of the dangers the party season can bring.

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'Misgendering' teacher to sue school over dismissal

By Eva Astrienidou

A CHRISTIAN teacher who faced disciplinary action after he referred to a transgender pupil as a girl is suing the school which claims he 'misgendered the pupil.

Joshua Sutcliffe from Oxford, was investigated by the school after he said 'well done girls' to a group that included a student who identifies as a boy.

Now, the Christian pastor is taking the school to an employment tribunal for constructive dismissal and discrimination.

The 27 year-old, who teaches children aged between 11 and 18, said the incident took place in early November and he apologised after the pupil became angry.

In a letter to the head teacher he said: "As a Christian, I do not share your belief in the ideology of transgenderism.

"I do not believe that young children should be encouraged to self-select a gender which may be different from their biological sex.

"Or that everyone at school should adjust their behaviour to accommodate such a transition" or that people should be punished for lack of enthusiasm about it."

Mr Sutcliffe claims the school systematically and maliciously breached his rights.

The maths teacher who is also a pastor at the Christ Revelation Church in Oxford said he tried to treat the pupil sensitively by avoiding the use of gender-specific pronouns and by referring to the pupil by name.

Documents seen at the time showed that he had also referred to him using the feminine pronouns 'she' and 'her' on other occasions.

Andrea Williams, chief executive of the Christian Legal Centre which is supporting the teacher, said: "We all know how much we change during our teenage years. It is vital that during those years we help our children to live in the biological sex they were born rather than encouraging them to change 'gender'.

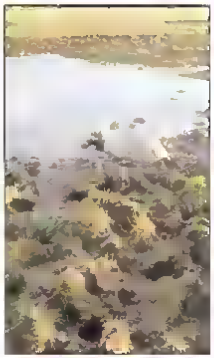
"If we collude in the transgender delusion we do not serve our children well, we harm them."

The story was made public last month, provoking national outcry.

Following the media attention, the school postponed the pre-scheduled disciplinary hearing and initiated further investigations against Mr Sutcliffe alleging breach of confidence and bringing the school into disrepute.

On Monday the secondary school said it would be "inappropriate" to comment.

Sheep rescued from marsh



A STRANDED sheep had a lucky escape after being helped out of a muddy marsh by the RSPCA.

A member of the public spotted the stricken sheep trapped in mud at Otmoor RSPB reserve in east Oxfordshire and contacted the animal welfare charity.

Animal collection officer Grace Mead said: "The poor ewe was stuck in the mud up to her chin. She was rocking from side to side but wasn't able to move.

"Thanks to a helping hand from the fire service and a local farmer we managed to free her and she ran off.

"Luckily she wasn't injured, just trapped and very frightened. She clearly couldn't climb to safety herself so needed a little help to get out of the muddy mess."

If you see an animal you have concerns about call the RSPCA's emergency line on 0300 1234 999.

Live living room scene with a message

'NO one should have no one' is the message behind an event aiming to help combat the epidemic of loneliness in older people.

Age UK is hosting a live living room scene in Bonn Square on Saturday as part of its annual winter campaign.

The scene, featuring local older actors will represent an older person being completely alone on Christmas Day, which according to the charity is the reality for thousands of people aged 65 and over across Oxfordshire.

The charity hopes to raise awareness and funds for those who are facing social isolation and need support.

The charity provides a Phone Friends service that helps more than 280 people in Oxfordshire, who receive at least one call a week from a volunteer – but a spokesperson says more needs to be done, with more than 11,000 people who regularly feel lonely in Oxfordshire.

Visit tinyurl.com/ybgrocf7

Tributes paid to PC killed in road crash

TRIBUTES have been paid after an on duty police officer and a 91-year-old woman died in a road collision last week.

PC James Dixon, aged 39, and 91 year old Gladys Goodwin died as a result of a road collision in Wargrave on the afternoon of December 5.

The collision involved a car and motorcycle which was being ridden by the on duty officer.

Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Francis Habgood said: "My officers, staff and I were devastated to hear the very sad news about our colleague.

"James was a hugely respected officer serving with the force for 18 years in a variety of roles.

"In policing we often talk about the strength and importance of the police family and that is never more so as we share in the pain of loss and offer support to one another at this time of need."

"Our thoughts remain with PC Dixon's family and friends, as well as those of Mrs Goodwin's, at this very difficult time."

Mrs Goodwin's daughter Sandra Blunden described her mum as a 'fun loving jolly lady that everybody loved as soon as they met her'.

She added: "I will be completely lost without her. She was full of fun and laughter and never had a bad word to say.

"I will remember her as the perfect mum that everybody would want."

The incident has been referred to the IPCC who have begun an investigation.

PC James Dixon died last week

Gladys Goodwin was also killed in the collision in Wargrave

MP calls for debate over river weed

HENLEY MP John Howell has called for an urgent debate in Parliament over a "highly invasive" weed which is significantly impacting parts of the River Thames.

Called Floating Pennywort, the weed is not native to the UK and is threatening aquatic wildlife in and around Henley and other stretches of the River Thames.

The weed, which can grow at a rate of up to 20cm a day according to the Environment Agency, suffocates native plants and fish and was banned from sale in 2014.

Mr Howell said via his "post bag" he had received concerns from many residents.

Talking in Parliament last week, Mr Howell said: "It is a strong contender for the worst aquatic weed in the UK and it is affecting large stretches of the Thames including around Henley.

"A debate would allow us to sort out how to deal with it."

Leader of the House MP Andrea Leadsom told colleagues the Environment Agency had already removed "thousands of tonnes" of the plant and was also "spraying" to control its growth.

She said a monitoring and removal programme would be in place from next spring.

The Environment Agency said: "We are aiming to begin similar works around Henley before the end of the year with the support of specialist contractors.

"We will also undertake further works on some of the river stretches already tackled in order to reduce further the risk of regrowth.

"Effective long-term management is extremely challenging, potentially very costly but very important if the plant's spread is to be controlled."

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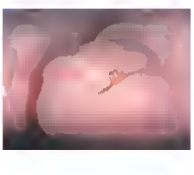

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Join Christingle services to help children in need

CHURCHES across Oxfordshire are inviting the community to help bring the 'promise of Christmas to vulnerable children.

A number of Christingle services will be held across the county this month in aid of the Children's Society.

All money raised from the traditional annual event will fund the charity's projects that support those who go missing from home or are experiencing hardship, abuse and neglect.

On Christmas Eve, St Michael's Church in Cumnor, St Mary's parish church in Chipping Norton, and St Helen's Church in Abingdon will host their services.

The festivities revolve around the lighting of Christingles – oranges decorated with a candle and red ribbon, dried fruits and sweets on cocktail sticks.

Christingle has been taking place for almost half a century with around one million people attending each year and more than £1million raised at events annually.

To find out more visit www.christingle.org.

>> Got a story? Call the newsdesk on 01235 516919 or 01235 516932

Hundreds spread seasonal joy at switch on

THAME was filled with snowflakes and sparkles as Santa and Frozen's Snow Sisters switched on the town's Christmas lights.

The festive season was officially marked with a switch-on earlier this month, with families and visitors enjoying a range of festive stalls, tasty food and a variety of attractions and entertainment on offer.

Father Christmas made the special journey to visit his grotto in the town and to wish the people of Thame a merry Christmas.

Visitors also had the opportunity to take a spin in the go-karts, play in the snow in a human-sized snow globe and take photos with the Snow Sisters.

There was also entertainment from a variety of local performance groups.

Many shops also stayed open late and offered a range of festive exclusives including free mince pies, special offers and face-painting for the children.

Just before the lights were switched-on, visitors were treated to a lantern parade through the town led by Father Christmas, the Mayor of Thame Cllr Tom Wyse and this year's Snowflake Search winner – two-and-a-half year old Ellen Sweet.

Ho ho ho-w did Santas do running in the cold?

By George Welch

MORE than 100 jolly Santas braved freezing temperatures and gave up their lunch to take part in a business park's fun run.

Milton Park was a sight to behold when workers ran, walked and jogged the 5k race on Friday to raise money for our charity of the year fundraising group Play2Give and MS Therapy Oxfordshire.

The event was a resounding success, with 150 people taking part raising more than £600 for both groups.

P2G founder Andy Baker, of Great Western Drive, Didcot, described the event as "fantastic" and "inspiring".

He said: "It was truly inspiring to see so many workers on the park and members of the gym turn out to support both causes braving the incredibly cold weather to dash around the business park.

"To see 150 signed up to take on the challenge of 5km on a bitter cold December day was heart-warming, and it was with the help of Santa, a real privilege to officially start them on their way."

The fastest man came in at 18 minutes while the first woman across the finish line was Didcot's very own charity running champion Eileen Naughton, who dressed as Lady Claus. Eileen has raised more than £20 000 by running many marathons over the years.

The run was organised by The Park Club gym and the business park to bring early festive spirit and cheer. It is hoped it will become an annual event in the calendar.

A Christmas fair was also held to boost the funds of P2G, which raises cash for Hesdway Oxfordshire and the Oxford Children's Hospital.

MS Therapy Oxfordshire provides affordable and accessible complementary therapies often not available on the NHS as well as information and support, to those with MS.

To donate to P2G's 10th anniversary appeal, which is nearing £20 000 visit tinyurl.com/zksd8xx.

Milton Park run was nothing compared to North Pole temperatures for these runners. Picture: Aurélien Langlais

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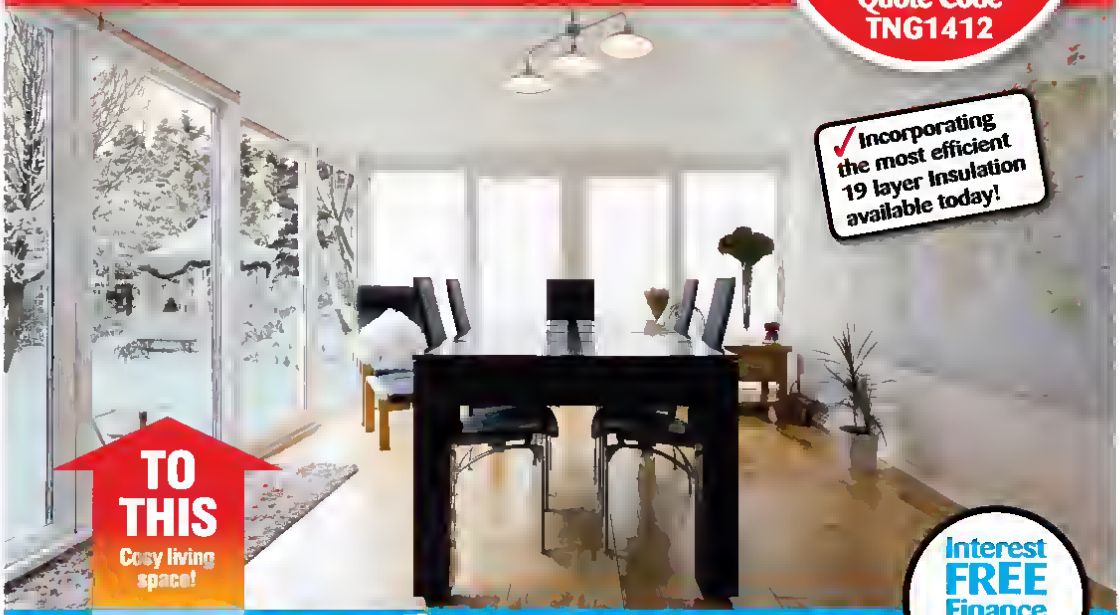

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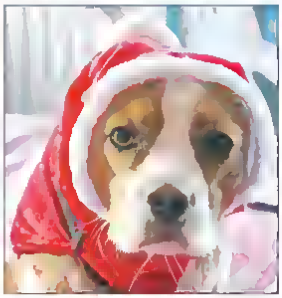
Becca Roberts, Annie Pickering and Alice Jones in their garden in Cowley Road dressed as Santa undeterred by the weather



John Greenwood's dog Hovis was ready to go as were event organisers Hannah Barrett and Hannah Smart, below

Bet they wish they'd checked their phones – the three who didn't get the message about the run being cancelled

Hardy soul Jo Aldhouse says: 'I gave it a go anyway, in my nearest park'

Sarah Brombley and Amana built a snowman instead

Santas sleighed by snow

Helen & Douglas House forced to cancel 11th annual Santas on the Run due to bad weather

By Owen Hughes

HELEN & Douglas House has apologised to the thousands of Santas stuck in the snow after the Oxford based charity was forced to cancel its biggest annual fundraiser due to treacherous weather conditions.

Heavy snowfall over the weekend led to the charity calling off its 11th Santas on the Run event, putting vital funds for the children's hospice at risk.

It is the first time the charity has had to cancel the fundraiser, but said it still needs people to make donations, send in sponsorship money and organise festive fundraising events to help support local terminally ill children and young adults.

Hannah Barrett, events manager for Helen & Douglas House, said: "We are very sad about having to cancel this great event which we know everyone was really looking forward to and raises vital funds for the charity.

"We texted and emailed all the participants, suppliers and staff early on Sunday morning to let them know not to come to the event.

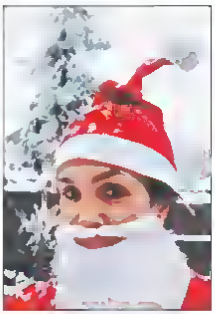
"Only three out of 1,809 participants did not get the message and made their way to the event."

She added that people are still planning to send in their sponsorship, but "inevitably we will raise less money than we normally would do".

"Even though the event was cancelled we have still incurred significant costs," she said.

"We are therefore hugely thankful to all the participants who have said they will not be requesting a refund."

Many of the Santas have chosen to run or walk the distance another day to help generate the much-needed funds for the hospice.

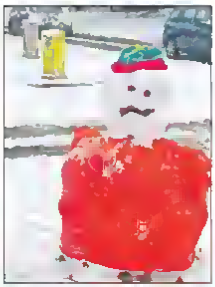


Rachel Monks in her Santa outfit

Lynn Lewis, mum of James who died at Douglas House in 2014, was planning on giving a speech at the event and said: "I appeal to participants to still send in their sponsorship, donate money and fundraise for them because the hospice really needs the money to help support families like ours."

Around 2,200 Santas took part in last year's 3.5km fun run which starts in Broad Street and goes through University Parks.

To donate or raise money for Helen & Douglas House this Christmas go to www.hdh.org.uk, email fundraising@helenanddouglas.org.uk, or call 01865 799150.



Helen & Douglas House snowman made by Alison Stone on the Oxford Ring Road to show support for the hospice and below, one made by Kayleigh and Brodie in Middle Barton

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Review: Samantha McGregor

Fun, laughter and slapstick!

WHAT a great start to the festive season thanks to the Oxford Playhouse pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk.

We just love pantomimes all the slap-stick and silliness makes you feel good and we always float out of the theatre.

And this year Jack and the Beanstalk, did not let us down.

For the third year running Steve Marmion has been at the helm.

He cleverly uses well-known pop tunes and a bit of Gnome to help tell the story of naive Jack, his sister Simone their mother Dame Trott cow Jagger and a handful of magic beans.

We join the tale as an evil giant has stolen all the children of Oxford and kept them prisoner in his kingdom above the clouds.

With the help of his baddie wife Dame Judy Hench played brilliantly by Amrou Al-Kadhi who has a first from Cambridge in "insults" they collect taxes by controlling the weather.

But when Jack throws the magic beans they start to grow and grow and grow into a giant beanstalk, which leads Jack on the adventure of a lifetime.

The show is full of gags – Brexit and tax havens get a mention as well as top tunes and all the pantomime fun you expect, including

the chance to join in with the song Chop 500 Sticks a take on The Proclaimers song I m Gonna Be which includes the well-known lync I would walk 500 miles.

It also includes some twists you don t expect, including the identity of the giant.

Watch out for Jennifer Wakefield who plays Jill as she makes her professional deout after leaving her Oxfordshire teaching career for one on the stage.

It you get the chance, go and enjoy the show.

The Oxford Playhouse has just announced Steve Marmion will write and direct next year's pantomime Dick Whittington and His Cat.

Tickets for Jack and the Beanstalk at Oxford Playhouse start at £15 and are available from the Ticket Office on 01865 305305 or view oxfordplayhouse com

On stage

Go Offbeat with fringe theatre

Applications have opened for the Oxford Playhouse and Arts at the Old Fire Station Offbeat Festival 2018.

Now in its th rd year, this festival showcases the best n fringe theatre from across the UK in nine action-packed days.

Running from June 22 to 30 Offbeat 2018 will feature more than 50 performances across six stages and for the first time will incorporate Oxford Playhouse's 440 seat auditorium.

The festival aims for at least a quarter of the programme to be from local artists and companies and all the performances are of works never before seen in Oxford.

The vast majority of the tickets will be priced at £10 or less in order to allow as many people as possible to see the shows.

Jeremy Spafford director at the Old Fire Station said "We love Offbeat.

"It is a moment when two great organisations come together to bring some of the best small scale contemporary work to Oxford audiences.

"We're hoping even more artists apply this year because we want this festival to grow and grow."

To apply to take part view offbeatoxford.co nk/apply and submit applications before January 30.

Join Common People in South Parks

Oxford s Common People is back for 2018 on May 26 and 27 at South Parks.

It is brought to the city by the multi-award-winning team who bring you Bestival and Camp Bestival.

Bands have yet to be announced for the festival, which will celebrate music, arts and community.

Common People curator Rob da Bank says: "All of us at festival headquarters love kicking our year off with Common People – it s such an easy formula turn up for lunchtime have a great day and evening listening to great bands and DJs and eating some of the best festi food around

and then be in your own bed before midnight. Simple We can t wait to drop into Oxford again."

Go to commonpeopleoxford.ticketline.co.uk/ for more information

Explore passion for adventure on film

By Samantha McGregor

THE Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour will stop off at Oxford's New Theatre next year

The festival features a collection of new adventure films starring the world's top explorers on mind-blowing journeys in wild and remote parts of the globe

For the first time the festival which depicts extreme adventurers from across the globe will be staged in more than 100 venues.

It stops off at the New Theatre on Wednesday February 7

Tour Director Nell Teasdale, said: "This is the first time we've topped 100 shows in the UK and Ireland which is really exciting

"UK and Irish audiences have a huge passion for adventure so we're delighted to be able to share these amazing films and their intrepid characters with wider audiences and even more venues

"We guarantee the tour will inspire viewers to start planning their own outdoor adventures too"

The tour's films are chosen from hundreds of films entered into the prestigious Banff Mountain Film Festival, which takes place every year in the Canadian Rockies

Highlights include The Frozen Road a film about Yorkshireman Ben Page who embarked on a solo bike-packing journey in the Canadian Arctic. It starts with his romantic vision of perfect solitude but as the latitude increases and the mercury falls below -30C he discovers what it truly means to travel alone in this great emptiness

There's also Into The Galaxies – A Greenland Epic, which features adventurers Ben Stookesberry, Sarah McNair Landry and Erik Brenner who take on an extreme mission in Greenland

The trio use kite skis and tow their white-water kayaks 1 000km over the Greenland Ice Cap to reach the northernmost river ever paddled – and then the challenge gets even tougher

Or see Dreamwalkers – The Faroes Project, set in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean the Faroe Islands are renowned for wild weather and swirling winds – certainly not ideal when you're perched on a wire between towering sea cliffs

Follow four Dutch friends as they attempt to be the first people to highline in these desolate islands

The tour is part of the wider Banff World Tour which travels the globe each year visiting nearly 50 countries and reaching more than 400,000 people worldwide

For tickets call 0844 871 3020 or go to atgtickets.com/oxford

The beauty and magic of Iceland

BANBURY Museum is hosting world-class photographer Tim Rudman's haunting visions of Iceland

Called Iceland An Uneasy Calm, Tim's images will be on display at the Castle Quay museum until January 20

Tim is acknowledged as one of Britain's finest landscape photographers and is respected internationally as a photographer printer author and authority on darkroom printing and toning techniques

Iceland is a land of myth magic and spectacular scenery where geysers spurt mud pools boil and steam billows from the ground

Iceland An Uneasy Calm is a journey into Rudman's eight-year long relationship with the country its spaces people and drama

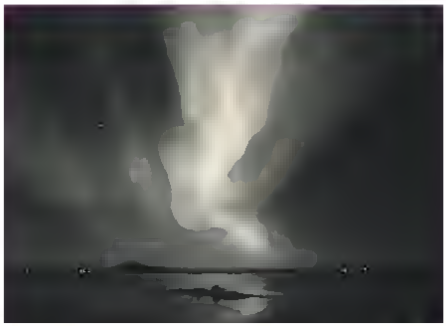
Tim said, "Iceland will be different for every photographer Sometimes it will be immediate and accessible sometimes elusive and tantalizingly out of reach like a word on the tip of the tongue

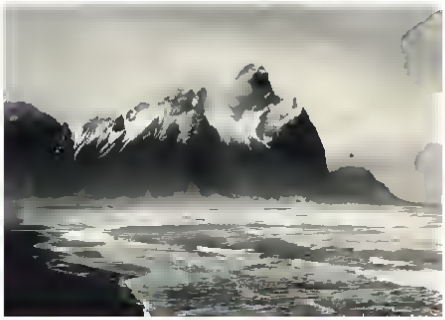
"It may be something that only slowly reveals itself in glimpses over time revealed perhaps by a change in the light, a local conversation or a new fragment of history

"It is never the same - there is always more."

Tim's work has earned many awards and has been featured in publications around the world

Tickets £4 for adults £3 concessions £2 children under 5s free





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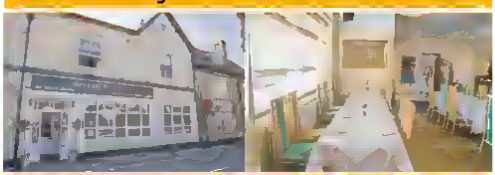

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FOOD HYGIENE RATING 5

Speaking – but what are heads saying?

By Samantha McGregor

THIS winter a gallery at Modern Art Oxford will be transformed into a theatrical set inhabited by a cast of large female heads.

The installation, Speakers, is a new commission by Swiss artist Nicolas Party, who lives and works in Brussels and New York.

Nicholas pays homage to the pioneering women in the city and its universities across the centuries balancing what he considers "the heavily masculine energy of Oxford's architecture and academic histories".

A key reference point is the set of carved stone busts that crown the railings of Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre – first sculpted for the site in 1662-83 – known colloquially as the heads of the emperors.

Party's heads are unique, individually painted sculptures, dominating the physical space of the gallery at a height of two metres tall.

The five sculptures produce an atmosphere of immersion and drama as Party has designed the heads to incorporate audio soundtracks which offer improvised theatrical encounters for gallery visitors.

There is also a curated series of public events taking place in the Piper Gallery, from music recitals to artist residences, which recognise the wide-ranging history of women's contributions to cultural life and international academic and research communities.

Party is both a classically trained painter and former graffiti artist. He has developed a signature aesthetic of saturated colour and flat, graphic style which is instantly recognisable.

His recent exhibitions include Hammer Projects: Nicolas Party at the Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles; Pathway for the Dallas Museum of Art and sunrise, sunset at the Hirshhorn Museum.

This year his work has appeared at Sculpture Garden, Washington and Dinner for 24 Sheep, Gallery Met, The Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Catch Nicolas Party's Speakers until February 18.

■ There's still time to see Hannah Ryggen's exhibition of Modern Art Oxford. Hannah, one of Scandinavia's most outstanding artistic figures, is renowned for her monumental tapestries exploring the political concerns of her time, from the rise of fascism and far right ideologies to the threat of nuclear power.

From St Tropez to Oxfordshire

COMEDIAN and writer Shazia Mirza is bringing her new live show, With Love From St Tropez, to Oxfordshire.

Following her critically acclaimed 2016 sell-out international run of The Kardashians Made Me Do It and Channel 4's Celebrity Island with Bear Grylls, Shazia will take to the stage at Banbury's Mill Arts Centre on Saturday, March 24, and The Old Fire Station, in Oxford, on April 6.

With Love From St Tropez is a show about lies and truth, nudity and the periodic table, and whether these things hold the key to the future.

In her show The Kardashians Made Me Do It, Shazia explored politically correct liberalism, the intrusion of ISIS into young British lives and Jihadi brides and enjoyed four sell-out runs in London as well as in the US, Sweden and Paris.

Shazia has recently appeared in a host of shows including BBC 2's Top Gear, ITV's Jonathan Ross and Loose Women, and is a regular panellist on Channel 5's The Wright Stuff.

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Competition

WIN tickets to the awe-inspiring Cirque du Soleil: OVO

Closing date Friday, January 5, 2018

Cirque du Soleil returns to the iconic Royal Albert Hall from 7 January 2018 with never before seen in the uk show OVO!

Immerse yourself in a colourful carnival of crazy crickets amazing ants and flexible fleas teeming with joy, amazement and mind-blowing signature Cirque du Soleil acts. Rush headlong into an ecosystem teeming with life where insects work, eat, crawl, flutter play fight and love.

Crawling with fun, OVO is a non-stop riot of energy and movement featuring many of Cirque du Soleil's show-stopping performers including a stunning 14m high flying trapeze act – the biggest of its kind!

An unforgettable experience. Don't miss your chance to experience the world-famous Cirque du Soleil at such an iconic London venue.

Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AP. Limited season 7 January – 4 March 2018.

Win a pair of tickets!

We have teamed up with Cirque du Soleil to offer our readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to see this highly sought after production at the Royal Albert Hall on Tuesday 27th February 2018 at 7.30pm.

There are 3x pairs of tickets to be won. To be in with a chance of winning answer the following question

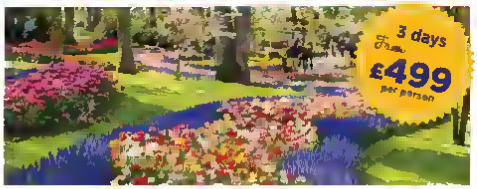
Q. Which animal kingdom does OVO explore? Reptiles, Mammals, Insects or Fish?

Prize tickets are Price Level 2-3 and are valid for Tuesday 27th February 2018 7.30pm performance only strictly subject to availability. All prize tickets will be supplied as e-tickets and are non-transferable. No cash alternative is available. Travel is not included

To enter this competition just email your answer to:

competitions@theoxfordpaper.co.uk

Reader travel



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KEUKENHOF

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- 2 nights half board at the 4 star Van der Valk Hotel, Almere
- Admission to the magnificent spring garden at Keukenhof
- Free time in Amsterdam, The Hague and Volendam
- Visit to Delft and the Delft Pottery de Delftse Pauw factory
- Hand luggage only (size and weight limits apply)
- All airport taxes, and coaching throughout

Quote KME646 | Visit: www.omega-holidays.com/KME646

The advertised price is correct as of 4 September 2017 and is based upon departures from Gatwick airport on all dates shown.

Organised by Omega Holidays plc, ABTA V4782. ATOL Protected 5081. Single supplement applies. Subject to availability. *We have included the current flight price within the above package price. Should the cost of flights change the package price may vary. The final price will be confirmed to you at time of booking.

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COMPETITION
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puzzle drome — Your weekly puzzle challenge

CROSS CODE

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
					U				C			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
				R								

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

MAGIC SQUARE

FLATTENED INFILLS

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.

Quiz Challenge

1. In the nursery rhyme Who Killed Cock Robin, what bird volunteered to be the parson?
2. What wardrobe item is the luxury retailer Thomas Pink best associated with?
3. For what does the common text message sign-off abbreviation PCM stand?
4. Which football club in Scotland was founded in 1874 by the rector and pupils of a school?
5. Olympic gold-medallist rower James Cracknell is married to which TV and radio presenter?
6. Kampala is the capital of which African country?
7. Which TV series, with Peter Davison in the title role, was adapted from mystery novels by Margery Allingham?
8. Which small town with a famous brewery completes the name of the Parliamentary constituency Bexhill and...where?
9. Which Warwickshire batsman played his 100th Test match for England at Headingley in June 2014?
10. What organic compound used to preserve biological specimens has the chemical formula CH_2O?

NONAGRAM

C	U	S
S	K	I
L	E	N

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
13 Good, 22 Very Good, 26 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.

D
M R
N Y A
I N B Y
T O A C K

FIVE ALIVE

ZP	AO	ON	EM	SL
HE		ED		IE
OB	RP	OE	WR	AN
RT		DU		DG
OA	AG	SR	EI	SE

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Sweets returned under pressure (8)
5 Thunderous applause? (4)
8 Fortified site used by holidaymakers (6)
9 In the convent it is of first importance (8)
10 New means of access used for breaking a deadlock (5 8)
11 Thought it was in the Merseyside area (4)
13 Lorry driver one lost in twisting drive (4)
17 Extremely fast, like a live news broadcast (5,2,1 5)
20 Short protest about sailor turning politician (8)
21 Top monkey gets a kiss (4)
22 Old president needed transport to hospital (4)
23 Deserving time, ring off (8)

DOWN
2 In turn each has the drinks container (3 3)
3 Former partner modelled naked (7)
4 Pie's a furry brown colour (5)
5 Tore after slaughter and spilt a little water (7)
6 Despicable person has one ring, a fascinating item (5)
7 Fasten most of the case (6)
12 There is one of three in this type is puzzle (7)
14 Trusting about Latin translation (7)
15 Polish up the Ferrer perhaps at the office (6)
16 Pack at sea (6)
18 The clergy form a great number in church (5)
19 Rita's indisposed but is out of bed (5)

SUDOKU

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9 and so must each 3 x 3 box.

Easy

		8			4			
			8			3	4	
				6			9	5
1			2	9	5		8	7
5	6				7	1		9
			3			4	5	
		7	9		8		1	
	3	5			1			
4				7	3	2		

Hard

			6	8		5		4
	8		4	9		7	1	
		2						
						8		
1		4						
7	6			1		4		
2		3						
	5				7	1	3	
6			1					5

EQUALISER

6 6
6 ◯ 3 ◯ 2
3 3
6 ◯ 3 ◯ 14
2 5

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same. Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

All puzzles on this page are supplied by Sirius Media Services. To try some of our puzzles interactively online go to www.puzzledrome.com
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QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Protected against disease (6)
4 Stabbed (6)
8 Addictive drug (6)
10 Moved to music (6)
11 Flowering plant (6)
12 Looked lecherously (6)
14 Roll of parchment (6)
16 Impolite (4)
17 Successor (4)
19 Grains of rock (4)
22 Deprivation (4)
26 Atomic cores (6)
27 Polar covering (6)
28 Operate a loom (5)
29 Thrust roughly (6)
30 Euphoric (6)
31 Delicately pretty (6)
32 Engraver (6)

DOWN
1 Breathe in (6)
2 Amalgamation (6)
3 Pinned down (6)
5 Subtle difference (6)
6 Agent (6)
7 Swindle (6)
9 Ram (4)
10 Bowl (4)
13 Rustic (5)
15 Wash lightly (5)
18 Innate (6)
19 Edible crustaceans (6)
20 Most modern (6)
21 Expired (4)
22 On air (4)
23 American cat (6)
24 Whisky (6)
25 Arachnid (6)

SOLUTIONS

[illegible]

"I honestly believe that Colourfence is the best general purpose fencing product on the market today!"

Get ready for Autumn

Now's the perfect time to replace your garden fence once and for all. Anna Ryder Richardson - Designer and Television Presenter - takes a closer look at Colourfence, the revolutionary low-maintenance system

It's been ten years since I regularly graced TV screens helping transform people's living spaces with MDF and stripped floorboards. Recently it's been more "celebrity mock out" than celebrity make-over as I took up the challenge of owning my own Wildlife Zoo in Tenby. In this time I've learnt quite a lot about fences and having researched the various options for my own benefit I thought I would share my knowledge with a wider audience.

The latest design processes mean there is now a tremendous array of fencing products for you to choose from...constructed from a variety of materials. Each has its own attributes and ultimately it can often come down to a matter of personal preference. For me there was one magic system that stood out as providing the best balance between price and functionality which eradicates fencing problems for good. Or for at least 25 years. Colourfence. For quality, value, longevity, aesthetic design, this fencing system ticks all the boxes. Fencing made for the 21st century that will transform the look of your garden which is supplied and fitted by a company whose customer service is as good as the product.

In my view Colourfence is the Rolls Royce of fencing – just without the exclusive price tag. What's more, it's guaranteed to stay in place in up to 130mph winds and is virtually maintenance free.

To find out how the experts from Colourfence might help you, I suggest you call **01865 582 171** and speak to their team.

Colourfence: The ultimate garden fence?

For many Colourfence is perhaps the ultimate choice. For the last 15 years it's been widely used across the UK and has steadily gained a reputation for its quality. By using the highest specification Colorbond steel as the fence structure itself, complemented by the highest level of customer service from accredited Franchisees, Colourfence is now regarded by many as the premium fencing solution in the market. Immune to the rot and resistant to the weather that so quickly effects wooden fences, Colourfence has none of the drawbacks of wood – plenty of additional benefits and what's more it's better value!

Call **01865 582 171** for more information

Gardeners' Questions

Q Wooden fence panels just don't seem to last - is there a storm resistant alternative?

A The Colourfence system has been tested under cyclonic conditions to withstand storms with wind gusts up to 130mph. Unlike your wooden fence – once professionally installed – Colourfence really will stay up.

Q No matter what I treat my wooden fence with - nothing seems to prevent it rotting or looking shabby for very long

A Treating your fence is a thankless and expensive task. It's also a losing battle. Wood simply wants to rot. Colourfence offers a low-maintenance alternative where by an occasional wash down will keep it looking great for up to 25 years! GUARANTEED!†

THIS WEEK'S JOB

†Terms and conditions apply. Details available on request.

Head into Autumn - with COLOURFENCE

The only garden fence you will ever need!

Every gardener knows that it pays to plan ahead. If you are one of the thousands of people who watched helpless, as winter winds battered their garden, it will not be a surprise that garden fences are almost always the first casualty. Whether you have previously patched, painted or simply prayed to keep your fence going, there's no escaping the fact that timber fences will always fall victim to the weather. With Colourfence you can put your garden straight once and for all. Colourfence is scientifically tested and cyclonically rated to ensure when professionally installed, it can withstand wind gusts of up to 130mph. Once it's up – it stays up and is guaranteed to look good year after year. Safe, extra secure and hassle free – you will NEVER need to paint it, treat it or patch it. An occasional hose down will be all you need do to keep it in top condition for years to come. In fact the system is so durable that Colourfence will guarantee† their fencing to last at least 25 years. Available in a range of colours to suit any garden, with or without decorative trellis, the highly skilled installation team make short work of their dramatic transformations. Your sad old fence will be efficiently cleared and replaced, leaving you to get back to enjoying your rejuvenated garden. Pricing is just as straightforward and equally attractive. Starting costs are in line with inferior timber systems but with no annual treatments required, Colourfence saves you time and money each and every year. Their aim is your peace of mind. With a 25 year guarantee† Colourfence speaks for itself and promises a lifetime of hassle-free enjoyment.

For more information and to arrange a FREE no obligation site visit simply call one of their helpful team on 01865 582 171

COLOURFENCE

the revolutionary low-maintenance system

01865 582 171

colourfence.co.uk

†Terms and conditions apply. Full details available on request.

In detail:

- Virtually Maintenance-free
- Save time & money – no treating required.
- Guaranteed† not to rot, warp or peel for up to 25 years
- Costs in line with far inferior timber systems
- Variety of colours and sizes available
- Professionally installed by accredited Franchisees

Colourfence is built to last!

NO PRESSURE PROMISE

To reassure customers that our free no obligation site survey and quotation is not a precursor to high pressure sales techniques, all Colourfence Franchisees have signed up to the Colourfence No Pressure Promise. Call or visit our website for details.

COLOUR FENCE

Saturday December 16

BBC 1

TOP TV

7.15pm Sports Personality of the Year 2017: The Contenders

MORNING

6.00am Saturday Kitchen Live
11.30am Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas

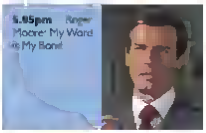
AFTERNOON

12.00pm Football Focus
1.00pm BBC News
1.10pm Sports Personality of the Year 2017: The Contenders
2.10pm Bargain Hunt
3.10pm Escape to the Country
4.00pm Final Score
5.20pm BBC News
5.30pm Regional News and Weather
5.40pm Pointless

EVENING

6.30pm Strictly Come Dancing
9.00pm Michael Mcintyre's Big Show
10.00pm BBC News
10.20pm Match of the Day
11.45pm The NFL Show
12.15am Surviving Christmas
1.40am Weather for the Week Ahead
1.45am BBC News
6.00am Breakfast

BBC 2



TOP TV

5.05pm Roger Moore: My Word is My Bond

MORNING

7.30am Naomi's Nightmares of Nature
8.00am Deadly 60
8.30am Show Me What You're Made of: UK
9.00am Saturday Mash-Up!
11.00am Penguins on a Plane: Great Animal Moves

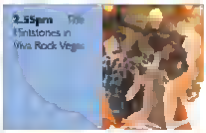
AFTERNOON

12.00pm Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well
12.50pm Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes
1.00pm Homes Under the Hammer
1.45pm Coast
2.20pm Garden Rescue
2.50pm Masterminds
3.20pm Pressured
5.35pm Roger Moore: My Word is My Bond

EVENING

6.35pm Escape to Athens
8.00pm Attenborough's Life That Glows
9.00pm Feud: Bette and Joan
9.55pm Feud: Bette and Joan
10.45pm QI XL
11.30pm Jeff Lynne's Elo: Wembley or Bust
12.45am Shadow of the Vampire
2.10am This is BBC Two
6.05am Coast

ITV



TOP TV

2.55pm Tim Minstones in Viva Rock Vegas

MORNING

9.00am Wishart
9.25am ITV News
9.30am Saturday Morning with James Martin
11.20am Gino's Italian Coastal Escape
11.50am Countrywise

AFTERNOON

12.20pm Thunderbirds are Go
12.40pm ITV News
12.50pm Endeavour
2.35pm The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas
4.35pm The Chase
5.35pm Paul O'Grady: For The Love of Dogs

EVENING

6.35pm ITV News London
6.15pm ITV News
6.20pm The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
9.45pm ITV News
10.00pm The Hangover
11.55pm Tonight at the London Palladium
12.45am Jackpot247
3.00am The Hungry Sailors
3.80am ITV Nightscreen
6.00am Sneity
6.10am Bottom: Krueder Street
6.30am Bottom: Krueder Street
6.35am Dino Dans

Channel 4

TOP TV

8.00pm The World's Most Expensive Presents

MORNING

7.30am Everybody Loves Raymond
7.45am Frasier
8.40am The Big Bang Theory
9.35am The Simpsons
11.05am Holiday in Handcuffs

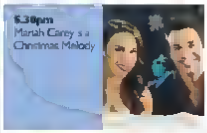
AFTERNOON

12.50pm Come Dine with Me
3.30pm Grand Designs
4.30pm Sell Last! Plans
5.35pm Channel 4 News

EVENING

6.00pm Want of the
7.00pm Guy Martin v the Rehet Car
8.00pm The World's Most Expensive Presents
9.00pm Pitch Perfect
11.10pm The Inbetweeners Movie
1.00am Tomorrow: When the War Began
2.40am The Last Leg
3.35am Hollyoaks Omnibus
5.40am Extreme Cake Makers
6.10am 3rd Rock from the Sun

Channel 5



TOP TV

5.30pm Mariah Carey's a Christmas Melody

MORNING

6.45am Noddy, Toyland Detective
6.55am Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom
9.15am Shimmer and Shine
9.30am Digby Dragon
9.45am The Gadget Show
10.45am Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?!

AFTERNOON

12.50pm One Christmas Eve
2.40pm Love Always, Santa
4.35pm Mariah Carey's a Christmas Melody
5.25pm 5 News
5.30pm Mariah Carey's a Christmas Melody

EVENING

6.35pm Sinkholes
6.55pm 5 News Weekend
9.00pm Football on 5
10.30pm NCIS: New Orleans
12.15am Super Casino
3.10am Harrogate: A Yorkshire Christmas
4.50am House Doctor
5.15am Wildlife SOS
5.40am Chinese Food in Minutes
5.35am Access
6.00am Little Princess
6.10am Wanda and the Alien
6.20am Poppy Cat

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AN ACADEMY EVENTS PRESENTATION

Sunday December 17th

TOP TV

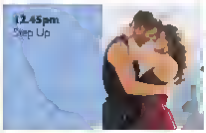
BBC 1

2.50pm
Toy Story 2

BBC 2

7.00pm
Polar Bear Town with Gordon Buchanan

ITV


12.45pm
Step Up

Channel 4

10.00pm
Die Hard

Channel 5

7.10pm
Legally Blonde

MORNING

BBC 1

- **7.30am** Match of the Day
- **9.00am** The Andrew Marr Show
- **10.00am** Fern Britton Meets
- **11.00am** Sunday Politics

BBC 2

- **8.35am** Countryfile
- **9.30am** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites
- **11.00am** Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas
- **11.30am** My Life on a Plate

ITV

- **9.55am** Countrywise Winter Wonderland
- **10.40am** The Martin Lewis Money Show
- **11.10am** Save Money: Good Food
- **11.00am** How to Spend it Well at Christmas with Phillip Schofield

Channel 4

- **7.05am** Everybody Loves Raymond
- **8.25am** Fraser
- **9.30am** Sunday Brunch

Channel 5

- **9.00am** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom
- **9.10am** Shimmer and Shine
- **9.30am** Digby Dragon
- **9.45am** Peppa Pig
- **10.00am** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- **10.35am** Football on 5

AFTERNOON

BBC 1

- **12.15pm** Bargain Hunt
- **1.00pm** BBC News
- **1.15pm** Mary Berry's Country House Secrets
- **2.15pm** Songs of Praise
- **2.50pm** Toy Story 2
- **4.20pm** Blue Planet II
- **5.20pm** BBC News
- **5.35pm** Regional News and Weather
- **5.45pm** Countryfile

BBC 2

- **12.15pm** MOTD2 Extra
- **1.00pm** Escape to the Country
- **1.30pm** Equestrian
- **4.35pm** Ski Sunday
- **5.20pm** Nativity!

ITV

- **12.40pm** ITV News
- **12.45pm** Step Up
- **2.50pm** Midsomer Murders
- **4.45pm** Tipping Point
- **5.45pm** The Chase: Celebrity Special

Channel 4

- **12.30pm** Paul Hollywood
- **1.00pm** James's Ultimate Christmas
- **2.05pm** The Simpsons
- **2.35pm** The Simpsons
- **3.05pm** Jingle All the Way
- **4.50pm** Born Silly
- **5.20pm** Channel 4 News
- **5.50pm** Miracle on 34th Street

Channel 5

- **12.00pm** Season's Greetings
- **1.50pm** Twelve Trees of Christmas
- **3.25pm** Our First Christmas
- **4.25pm** 5 News
- **4.40pm** Our First Christmas
- **5.20pm** 5 News Weekend
- **5.25pm** A Heavenly Christmas

EVENING

BBC 1

- **6.45pm** Sports Personality of the Year 2017
- **9.00pm** The Apprentice
- **10.00pm** The Apprentice: You're Hired
- **11.00pm** BBC News
- **11.20pm** Regional News and Weather
- **11.20pm** Ronny Chieng: International Student
- **11.55pm** Weather for the Week Ahead
- **12.00am** BBC News
- **6.00am** Breakfast

BBC 2

- **7.00pm** Life in Polar Bear Town with Gordon Buchanan
- **8.00pm** James May's Toy Stories
- **9.00pm** The Alternativity
- **10.00pm** Detectorists Christmas Special
- **10.30pm** Match of the Day 2
- **11.30pm** Insert Name Here
- **12.00am** Roger Moore: My Word is My Bond
- **1.00am** Question Time
- **2.00am** Holby City
- **3.00am** This is BBC Two
- **6.00am** Flog it! Trade Secrets
- **6.30am** Island Medics

ITV

- **6.45pm** The Chase: The Bloopers
- **7.40pm** ITV News London
- **7.00pm** ITV News
- **8.00pm** The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug
- **11.05pm** ITV News
- **11.25pm** Through the Keyhole
- **12.15am** Jackpot247
- **3.00am** Tenable
- **3.00am** ITV Nightscreen
- **5.00am** The Jeremy Kyle Show
- **6.00am** Good Morning Britain

Channel 4

- **8.00pm** Coastal Railways with Julie Walters
- **9.00pm** Inside Bentley: A Great British Motor Car
- **10.00pm** Die Hard
- **12.30am** Mercury Rising
- **2.25am** I Origins
- **4.10am** Location, Location, Location
- **5.05am** Extreme Cake Makers
- **5.35am** Countdown
- **6.20am** 3rd Rock from the Sun

Channel 5

- **7.10pm** Legally Blonde
- **9.00pm** Agatha Christie's Crooked House
- **10.50pm** Sleepy Hollow
- **12.50am** Criminals Caught on Camera
- **1.15am** Super Casino
- **3.10am** My Crazy Christmas Obsession
- **4.00am** My Mum's Hotter Than Me!
- **4.50am** House Doctor
- **5.15am** Wildlife SOS
- **5.40am** Chinese Food in Minutes
- **5.55am** Access
- **6.00am** Puffin Rock
- **6.10am** Floppy Cat

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SKODA Octavia VRS 2.0 TSi (245)

Perfect for a family and for business

By **Tony Yates**

MANY people still say that Skoda is nothing more than a cheaper version of a VW – and of course I disagree with this very much, because Skoda have proved to me over the last few years that they are more than capable of standing on their own two feet and I for one now look at Skoda as an individual company which produces fantastic cars. I mean just look at the new Octavia VRS. It's an awesome car and it deserves to be right in the spotlight because it's utterly brilliant in every way.

Power and efficiency

The 2.0-litre TSi petrol engine has a 0-62 time of 6.4 seconds and a top speed of 155mph. Fuel consumption is also good, giving a combined figure of 42.8mpg. So, firstly how well does it get a move on.

Basically, like a scalded Cat if I'm being honest. I'm not kidding here folks it's astonishingly quick. The vRS for me is the total sleeper car – so be warned, if you do decide to take it on, you will almost certainly be crossing the finish line in second place.

The new Skoda Octavia is more than capable of standing on its own two feet.

On the road

The 245PS engine that's fitted to the vRS is enthusiastic and pretty much perfect. Also into the corners, the chassis feels poised and tight, even when dealing with all the potholes and bumps on some of our worst roads. Plus when the tarmac gets twisty the chassis firms up to give you maximum grip in and out of every corner. The steering also feels light, direct and is perfectly balanced with plenty of feedback on what the road beneath you is doing.

Interior & technology

First off I'm so glad to see that the designers at Skoda have paid a lot of attention to the detail inside the cabin of the vRS and thankfully it now feels more refreshing and modern than the previous vRS model I tested a while ago. Also the seats are really comfy and the controls are well set out – plus the addition of the cabin mood lighting on the door panels is a lovely touch and something that helps soothe the mind.

On the inside there's plenty of standard equipment, which includes dual-zone air conditioning, cruise control, acoustic rear parking sensors, Amundsen touchscreen satellite navigation system, driving mode selection (eco/comfort/sport/custom), driver fatigue sensor, electro mechanical front locking differential, driver's seat with memory function and 19" Xtreme gloss black alloy wheels.

Plus you also get ESC incl, EBV, MSR, ASR, EDS, TCSA and DSR ESBS, TSA, MKB, XDS all as standard along with more kit than you will ever need. That's what I love about Skoda, they are not afraid to give you everything you will ever need, right there when you need it.

Space inside the Octavia is very good – easily managing to fit in a family of four. The boot space alone is also huge – and you would have no trouble at all fitting in the whole family.

Also, if you are looking to own the vRS as a business car then go and sign on the dotted line right 'now' – before they all sell out.

To sum up

I like the Octavia vRS because its practical, fun to drive, has bags of torque and plenty of space on the inside. Big Skoda smiles here then.

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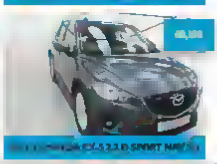

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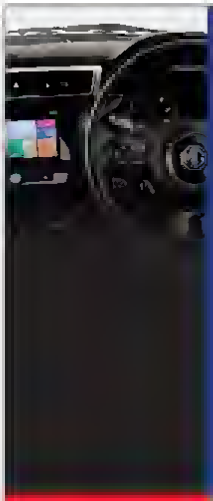

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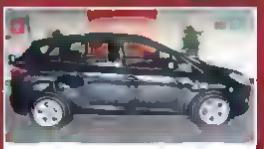

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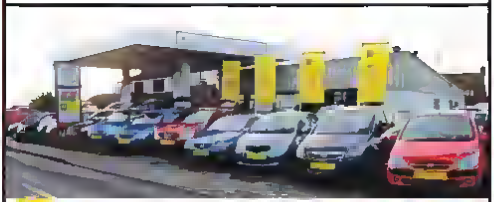

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Cambridge men and women celebrate scoring tries in their respective victories over Oxford Pictures: *Matt Impey / Wired Photography*

Double dose of Varsity Blues

By George Welch

Varsity rugby

THERE was double disappointment for Oxford University as both men and women's teams suffered defeat in the annual Varsity matches at Twickenham last week.

The women were looking to make it back-to-back victories after their memorable win last year and a promising term's results but ended up losing 24-0, their third Varsity without managing to cross the Cambridge try line.

The men also arrived at the home of English rugby in confident mood having won eight out of 10 fixtures this term, but failed to repeat this form on the big day and suffered their second successive Varsity loss, 20-10.

In a fiercely contested game, Cambridge's pack gained the upper hand giving their back line the platform to score three tries through man of the match Chris Bell, Archie Russell and Bristol full back Charlie Amesbury.

No 8 Will Wilson crossed the whitewash for Oxford but it was not enough to overcome their arch rivals in the 136th Varsity meeting between the sides.

It was a case of what could have been for the Dark Blues who had the better of the opening half but had three tries disallowed.

The Light Blues' defence was ferocious throughout as Cambridge put in a committed all-round display worthy of victory.

It was a one-sided affair in the 31st women's match as Cambridge tries from Jess Gurney, captain Lara Gibson, lively scrum half Kate Marks and winger Bluebell Nicholls were enough to reclaim the Varsity trophy.

Cambridge were utterly dominant throughout and deserved their convincing victory.

Oxford gave their all up to the last play of the game, but the Light Blues' physical dominance and their control of the conditions was too much for them to handle.

Next year's matches have been scheduled at the same venue for Thursday, December 6.

Vaeerama National League South
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St Albans 1-1 **Oxford City**

Evo-Stik South Premier
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Shortwood United P-P **Kidlington**

Uhlsport Hallanic League Premier Division
Saturday 9 December
Brackley Town Saints 1-3 **Wantage Town**

Butler helps serve up 15-point win for Wheatley

Rugby Union

LOWLY Abingdon were no match for Wheatley, who smashed their travel sick visitors 33-18 in a one-sided BBO Premier fixture on Saturday.

Toby Butler, Iain Downer and Jack Taylor all crashed over in the first half for the hosts to rack up a 21-13 half time lead.

Arron Laman increased the lead in the second half by scoring all the points himself, including converting one of his two tries.

Abingdon tries came from Jamie Lochrie and George Law.

Elsewhere in the division, Didcot woo 15-8 at Hungerford to leapfrog them to seventh.

In National League 2, Chinnor remain a point clear at the top following a narrow 37-34 win at Bury St Edmunds.

Henley made it six wins from eight with a 43-28 win at home to Worthing.

In South West 1 East, Banbury made it three wins from three with a 47-22 win at Wimborne while Oxford Harlequins beat Old Centralians 27-10 at home.

There were defeats however for Witney and Grove. Witney were hammered 58-10 at leaders Old Patesians while Grove lost their 10th game of the season in a 30-25 defeat on their travels in Salisbury.

Bicester (13th) host Banbury (3rd) on Saturday while Grove (12th) welcome Stratford (9th) to south Oxfordshire and Witney (8th) visit Oxford Harlequins (5th).

Wheatley's Jack Taylor celebrates scoring against Abingdon in their 33-18 BBO Premier win over Abingdon Picture: *Simon Chadbone*

Thame edge closer to play-offs with another victory

Evo Stik round-up

A RUTHLESS first-half helped Thame United move to within five points of the Evo Stik South East play-offs.

Hosts United were 3-0 up by the interval against Fleet Town with James McGowan (9 minutes), Luke Ricketts (16) and Lynton Goss (44) all finding the back of the net.

Dan West (63) added a fourth in the second half as United shared the goals around and cruised to a 4-0 win.

Didcot Town endured a more difficult day in the West division however, suffering a 2-0 defeat at lowly Mangotsfield and stretching their winless streak on the road to five matches.

Seth Rumphries and George Reid went close early on for the Railwaymen, but the Mangos took the lead five minutes after the break as Jordan Ricketts tapped in following a defensive error.

Kane Simpson fired home with 10 minutes remaining to secure the points for the home side.

There was still time for things to get worse for Diddy as George Jeacock was shown a straight red card late on.

Kidlington suffered a second successive defeat as a late goal saw them lose 1-0 at Wimborne Town. Tobias Holmes struck in the 87th minute for the hosts.

North Leigh's home game against Yate Town on Saturday was postponed due to a frozen pitch.

The following matches were called off on Tuesday due to the adverse weather conditions. Cirencester Town v North Leigh, Shortwood United v Kidlington and Thame United v Hartley Wintney.

Georga Reid, pictured scoring last season, want clase for Didcot early on as tha Railwaymen lost 2-0 at Mangotsfield. Picture: *Roger Neal*

'Lucky MP' helps Puritans claim home win at last

Banbury United

BANBURY MP Victoria Prentis proved to be the lucky mascot as she watched the Puritans claim their first home win since August.

The north Oxfordshire politician met supporters and sponsors while on the pitch, Banbury United dismantled mid-table Royston Town 3-0.

Second half goals from Conor McDonagh, Leam Howards and Jefferson Louis earned United maximum points for the second game running as they extended their unbeaten league run to six games.

McDonagh missed a first half penalty but the strikers were clinical after the break.

McDonagh netted his 13th goal of the season while Bowards made it five for the campaign as United recorded back-to-back wins for the first time since October.

United's match at Redditch United on Tuesday was postponed due to a snow-covered pitch. The game has been rearranged for Tuesday, January 16.

Banbury, who climbed a position to eighth following their win against Royston, host third-placed Weymouth on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the club has added a former Benfica academy player to their ranks.

Portuguese left back Nuno Felix joined the Banbury Plant Hire Community Stadium side following his departure from Chippenham Town last week.

The 27-year-old, a regular in the Bluebirds' Southern League Championship winning side last season, has previously played for Taunton Town, Clevedon Town, Yate Town and Bridgwater Town.

City battle till to the end to earn a deserved draw

By George Welch

OXFORD City extended their National League South unbeaten run to six games with a battling 1-1 draw at playoff-hunting St Albans.

The Hoops dominated the first half and went in at the break a goal to the good thanks to a Rob Sinclair opener mid-way through the first half.

However the home side controlled the second period and Sam Merson scored a deserved equaliser three minutes from the end.

The draw was a fair result according to Hoops boss Mark Jones, whose side have scooped 12 points from their last six matches.

Jones said: "If you look at the balance of play a draw was probably a fair result.

"In the first half we were the better side. We dominated and went in 1-0 up and we could have had more.

"We were in control of the game [but] I don't think we had that control in the second half."

Jones changed the shape at half time to prevent the St Albans full backs getting forward.

Although it didn't earn maximum points, the gaffer stressed it's a point gained away from home and that his side would take it and move on.

Jones admitted his players looked leggy following a jam-packed last couple of months but refused to criticise any of his players following the resurgence in form.

He said: "Today [against St Albans] you could see second half we were really starting to struggle physically.

"The lads have put a lot of effort in over the last month. We were battling away to the end trying to get there [but] we couldn't quite get the clean sheet and the three points.

Rob Sinclair, pictured earlier in the season, got City up and running against St Alban on Saturday. Picture: Michael Allen

"I'm not going to criticise any of our players because they've worked incredibly hard for us."

City have the weekend off and their next game won't be until Saturday December 23 when they host Hampton & Richmond Borough.

Jones added: "We've got two weeks until our next game and it's an opportunity to get the right type of training into the lads.

"It's not a bad thing to have a bit of a break before the Christmas games."

Fergie's fury over added time

A SEETHING Darren Ferguson bemoaned his side's luck as he slated the referee for adding too much stoppage time in Saturday's game.

The furious Doncaster Rovers chief laid into the officials after Josh Ruffels struck in the 96th minute to send Rovers home pointless.

Ferguson, angered that six minutes was played when only three was added on, told The Yorkshire Post: "The game should be finished by the time they put it into the net, and it's painful in the dressing room because we want to go out and win.

"The performance was really good and so that's a hard one to take.

"We've been very unfortunate. My job is to keep the players positive, but its painful for me too.

"It's a very sore one to take, it's a game we shouldn't have lost and we will have to learn from it."

It was one of several complaints Ferguson had about the game and he demanded an explanation from referee Sebastian Stockbridge after the game.

The former Peterborough United and Preston North End boss also felt the ball went out of play in the build up to the Oxford penalty which he felt wasn't a penalty.

Indeed, the foul on Jack Payne for the penalty did seem to happen outside the box.

However the time added on was a minimum of three minutes and the game paused in injury time as Doncaster player Harry Toffolo received treatment.

Ferguson added: "Unfortunately the officials have let us down. Their performance was not good enough."

New MD 'part of a bright future'

A NEW managing director has been appointed as Oxford United continue to reshuffle their off-the-pitch staff.

Niall McWilliams is the new man in the building and will work alongside the club's finance director to help efficiency at the club.

He has worked alongside the club in his current role as the executive headteacher at The Oxford Academy and John Henry Newman Academy. He will continue these roles on a part-time basis.

Chairman Darryl Eales was pleased to welcome McWilliams to the club.

He said: "Niall is already well known to many people across the club and brings a wealth of complex leadership experience as well as an in depth local knowledge, especially grass roots football and connections with local institutions.

"Although a Celtic fan by birth, Niall is a passionate supporter of OUFC and will bring his work ethic, enthusiasm and continuous improvement focus to the benefit of the club."

The appointment follows the recent re-appointment of Richard Blackmore as head of club operations and the promotion of Claire Theobald to commercial and retail operations manager.

Eales said these changes "mean that we have strength in depth across club operations and we will continue to drive continuous improvement and greater efficiency across the club."

McWilliams, who said it was an "honour" to join the club, added: "Darryl and the staff behind the scenes have worked so hard in moving every area forward and I want to be part of a very bright future here."

Agony for United with injury-time loss

OUFCW

GOALKEEPER Demi Lambourne believes Oxford United Women should have claimed all three points as their 2017 ended in defeat at London Bees.

Destiney Toussaint's late winner for the Londoners at a wintry Hive extended United's winless run to eight games.

U's stopper Lambourne said: "We're really disappointed. We wanted to get a win to round off 2017 but it wasn't to be. Late on they put the pressure on, and I made a few good saves. We created some chances too but we didn't put it away. It's three points lost.

"The end product just wasn't there, and their goalkeeper fair play to her she made some great saves as well.

"I don't think the draw would have been fair we'd have liked to have get the win, and it's bad when you lose like that."

The Bees took an early lead through a deft Paula Howells free-kick but the U's were level midway through the first half.

The equaliser came in farcical fashion as Oxford's top scorer Kayleigh Himes' low shot skidded through Nicola Hobbs' hands through her legs and trickled over the line.

Toussaint grabbed the win for the hosts however with a last ditch strike in the dying seconds of injury time sliding the ball past Lambourne.

Fifth placed Oxford's next game will be January 7 when they host Durham Women (2nd).

Freds win again as they keep pressure up

Hellenic round-up

WANTAGE Town extended their unbeaten run to six matches with a 3-1 win at Brackley Town Saints.

The win made it three wins on the spin for the Freds, who took the lead four minutes into first half stoppage time.

Jim Glover got the deserved opener and team-mate Steve Robertson doubled the away side's advantage shortly after the restart.

Levi Steele pulled a goal back for the Brackley development side with nine minutes remaining – but Wantage quickly dashed any hopes of a Saints comeback three minutes later.

Robertson grabbed his second of the afternoon to secure the three points and keep the pressure on at the top of the Hellenic premier division.

Fourth-placed Wantage are 12 points off league leaders Highworth Town but are only two points behind Thatcham Town in second, which this season has a chance of promotion (12 of the 14 runners up at step five will be promoted).

The Freds host Windsor (11th) on Saturday as they continue to hunt down that second spot.

Oxford City Nomads and Abingdon United had the week off but are in Challenge Cup action this weekend.

The Nomads travel to Moreton Rangers on Friday before Ardley United welcome Bracknell Town to north Oxfordshire and Abingdon visit Lydney Town in the same competition on Saturday.

SkyBet League 1		GP	GD	PTS
1	Wigan Athletic	20	26	45
2	Shrewsbury Town	20	13	43
3	Blackburn Rovers	20	19	40
4	Bradford City	21	0	39
5	Scunthorpe United	21	11	38
6	Charlton Athletic	20	5	35
7	Portsmouth	21	2	32
8	Oxford United	21	8	29
9	Rotherham United	21	4	29
10	Peterborough United	21	1	29
11	Walsall	20	0	28
12	Southend United	21	-8	28
13	Blackpool	21	-2	27
14	Fleetwood Town	21	3	27
15	Bristol Rovers	21	-4	27
16	Oldham Athletic	21	-4	26
17	MK Dons	21	-7	25
18	Doncaster Rovers	21	-5	23
19	Rochdale	20	5	20
20	AFC Wimbledon	20	7	20
21	Gillingham	21	-8	20
22	Plymouth Argyle	21	-13	20
23	Northampton Town	21	-21	19
24	Bury Town	20	-9	17

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Josh Ruffels powers home Oxford's extra time winner to push his side up to eighth in the table
Picture: Steve Daniels

U's late, late, late show

By George Welch

Oxford United 1
Josh Ruffels 90+6

Doncaster Rovers 0
Attendance: 6,711 (462 away)

PEP Clotet hailed his side's never say-die attitude as Oxford United left it late – very late – to squeeze past Doncaster Rovers.

Having snatched a 92nd minute winner against Gillingham in the Checkatrade Trophy the previous week, Clotet's men left it even later at the Kassam on Saturday.

The U's had Josh Ruffels to thank as he riffled home from 30 yards on 96 minutes to bag his fifth goal of the season in a 1-0 win for his boyhood club.

The last-gasp winner came after Jack Payne missed a second half penalty and Doncaster's Tommy Rowe saw an effort strike the inside of the post before perilously trickling along the line and away from danger.

"It shows how determined the team is to fight until the last breath of the game and show the commitment to the club themselves and the fans to fight to the last moment," Clotet said.

"Despite having missed the penalty the team kept working against a tough opposition who managed to play well – they caused a lot of problems with our build up play and we couldn't find that fluent game we normally have.

"Despite that the players showed lots of character [to get the winner]."

United recorded back-to-back wins (in all competitions) for only the second time this season as they climbed two positions to eighth in the Sky Bet League One table.

Clotet, who said it was "justice" for the hard working Ruffels to net the winner, added, "We got the three points that maybe we missed in other games so I'm delighted for the boys who did a really good job and have learnt a lot of lessons.

"There's a fantastic atmosphere within the squad and club. Everyone is working hard to move the club forward and the only way to do that is to take small steps in the right direction."

The U's, five points off the play-offs, travel to Rochdale (19th) on Saturday.

Following last week's draw, they will travel to Charlton Athletic on January 9 in the third round of the Checkatrade Trophy.

'I just thought why not as I struck the ball in final seconds'

MATCH winner Josh Ruffels savoured the limelight after driving home a 96th minute 30-yarder to score his first winning goal in style.

The midfielder struck the back of the net with a superb long-range strike deep into injury time to snatch the three points and end a run of three successive home defeats.

"It was pretty special. I can't remember ever scoring so late before," Oxford-born Ruffels said.

"I'd had a couple of similar chances but played it wide, but this time I just thought 'it's the final seconds of the game, why not?' I concentrated on striking it properly and it has just crept inside the post."

The goal came despite Ruffels being asked to play in a slightly different position in the midfield.

He said: "I was in a different role – just a bit deeper to try and make sure the defence was nice and tight, so I didn't get forward as much as usual. But I managed to get that one opportunity and thankfully I took it."

United had a stroke of luck when Rovers hit the post in the second half with the ball rolling to safety after travelling across the face of goal, but they could also have won it earlier on when awarded a penalty.

Ruffels said: "Moments like that have to go your way. If so you have to then take advantage.

"For the penalty I was way back from the play but didn't actually think it was inside.

"Unfortunately Jack didn't put it away but he can owe me a drink for the goal!"

United now have three wins from their last five games as they approach the busiest time of the season.

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